

(1957)

Mr. M. J. Iken's telephone conversation with Mrs. Josephine Robertson of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 31, 1957. Subject: statues from the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy, Dijon. The Museum will be very glad indeed to return the figures if other museums do the same, for instance, if the Louvre returns the hundreds of paintings taken by Napoleon; the British Museum returns the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon; if the Toledo Museum returns the Romanesque cloisters which came from France; if the Cluny Musee in Paris returns the gold altar from Basle and if America is returned to the Indians. I really think the idea of Utopia is a wonderful thing but we've never yet been able to reach it.

The point is that they were in the Clarence Mackey collection - all four were in his collection at Harbor Hill, Long Island - and were sold at his death. Were it not for the Second World War the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam would have bought them all. They had been in private collection in France for 150 years - France could have bought them easily then.

Block says in his article that Dijon offered us magnificent things if we would return them. The objects they offered might have seemed important to them, but were of utterly no importance to us. His (Block's) campaign against us has been going on for quite a number of years. The Director (of Dijon) has gotten Block to do this, although I can't say in so many words. We shall have four (figures).

It has embarrassed my friends in France very much. Friends at the top of museums in France think it is unfair. The man at the head of all French museums apologized to me for this demand. Great museums in the world have things obtained in much the same way, the Louvre for example. There is no flaw in our title. The figures were in France up until thirty or forty years ago when Mackey purchased them.

Block had a young man in Dijon last summer who said he was doing research for Mr. Block of the Toledo Blade. The figures were originally in the mortuary chapel of the Dukes of Burgundy just outside Dijon and were removed to the Palace of Dijon during the French Revolution for safe-keeping. At that time some of the figures went into private collections. Our figures were in a private collection in Dijon.

The figures are of white-toned marble and are 16-3/8" high. They surrounded the tomb. The idea in Burgundy at this time was that hooded figures in procession

represented mourning. The figures are now stored in boxes and will be shown at the opening. One of ours came from the tomb of Philip the Bold, executed by Claud de Werve, and the other from the tomb of John the Fearless, created by Antoine le Moiturier. They are great sculpture of their time and are ambassadors of French art to the United States. They mean a great deal in understanding French culture. The Blade wanted to appeal to sentiment.